

REMARKS

Objections to the Drawings (paragraph 2 of the Office Action)

Corrected drawing sheet 8 has been provided herewith. Applicant has corrected Figure 8 as suggested by the Examiner during the interview in order to overcome the objections set forth in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. In order to conform the specification to corrected Figure 8, paragraph 32 has been amended as set forth above.

Rejection of Claims 1 – 9, 11 – 13 (paragraphs 3-5 of the Office Action)

As discussed with the Examiner, even assuming that there is some suggestion or motivation to modify or to combine the cited references in the manner suggested, a conclusion with which Applicant respectfully disagrees, the prior art relied upon by the Examiner cannot render claims 1- 9 and 11 - 13 obvious for at least the reason that such prior art references when combined do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of said claims. (See M.P.E.P § 2143.) Specifically, Shotbolt '737 does not teach or suggest the use of steel catenary risers (SCR's) attached to a buoyancy device. As the Examiner correctly notes in the Office Action, pipes 10 in Figure 4 of Shotbolt '737 are flexible pipes. (See Shotbolt '737, col. 3, line 8.) As discussed with the Examiner, flexible pipes 10 extend all the way from seabed equipment 1 to support 3 and to upper connector 24. (See Shotbolt '737, Figures 2 and 3; col. 3, lines 65 – 68; col. 4, lines 64 – 67.) The “unnumbered catenary risers from 1 to 3” referenced in the Office Action are therefore flexible pipes, not SCR's.

The distinction between flexible pipes and SCR's is well understood by those of skill in the art. The presently rejected claims of the instant application recite the use of one or more steel catenary risers extending upwardly from the sea floor and attached at their upper ends to a variable buoyancy device and one or more flexible pipe jumpers extending from the variable buoyancy device to a surface production facility so as to allow fluid communication between the steel catenary riser terminating at the variable buoyancy device and the surface production facility. Pipes 10 in Shotbolt '737 are of a single type, namely flexible pipes. Accordingly, Shotbolt '737 when combined with the references as suggested by the Examiner does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Objection to Claim 10 (paragraph 6 of the Office Action)

As discussed above, the claims from which claim 10 depends cannot be rendered obvious by the references cited by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claim 10 be withdrawn.

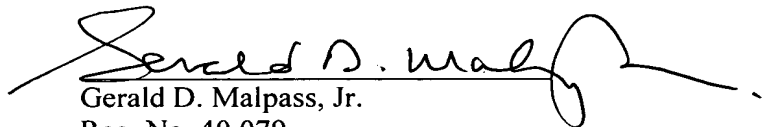
CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections and objections and allowance of all claims, claims 1-13 and presently allowed claims 14-19. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help advance the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

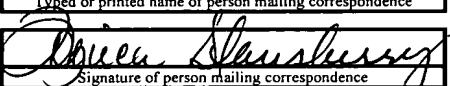
Respectfully submitted,

July 15, 2005

Date


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I hereby certify that, on the date shown below, this application/correspondence attached hereto is being:	
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<div>Monica Stansberry <small>Typed or printed name of person mailing correspondence</small></div> <div> <small>Signature of person mailing correspondence</small></div>	<div>N/A <small>Express Mail mailing number</small></div> <div>July 15, 2005 <small>Date of Deposit</small></div>
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<input type="checkbox"/> transmitted by facsimile to the Examiner _____ at the USPTO at facsimile number:	

IN THE DRAWINGS

A corrected drawing sheet for drawing sheet 8 (which contains Figures 8 and 9) is provided herewith. Please replace the current drawing sheet 8 with corrected drawing sheet 8.